

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3427
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AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR
AMCONSUL ADANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 6924

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PINT, TU
SUBJ: ECEVIT GOVERNMENT STRENGTHENED BY SHORT SPECIAL
LEGISLATIVE SESSION

REF: (A) ANKARA 6620; (B) ANKARA 6710

1. AFTER FIVE DAYS OF A SPECIAL SESSION, THE LOWER HOUSE
OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WENT INTO RECESS SEPTEMBER 26 BEFORE
CONSIDERING THE GOVERNMENT'S "CENTERPIECE" LEGISLATION,
THE TAX REFORM BILL. (THE SENATE WILL STAY IN SESSION
UNTIL IT HAS DISPOSED OF LEGISLATION PASSED BY THE LOWER
HOUSE.) MOST OBSERVERS AGREE THAT THE SHORT SPECIAL SESSION GAVE
THE ECEVIT GOVERNMENT A CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLO-
GICAL BOOST. DESPITE ITS RAZOR-THIN MAJORITY OF THREE VOTES,
ECEVIT'S COALITION RESPONDED TO THE BOYCOTT AND DELAYING
TACTICS OF THE OPPOSITION WITH IMPRESSIVE DISCIPLINE,
MAINTAINING PERFECT ATTENDANCE THROUGHOUT THE GRUELING
MARATHON SESSIONS. (ONE GOVERNMENT DEPUTY COLLAPSED WITH
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AN ATTACK OF ACUTE APPENDICITIS DURING AN EVENING SESSION,
BUT AFTER AN OPERATION WAS BROUGHT IN ON A STRETCHER
TO ATTEND THE NEXT DAY'S MEETING.) THE OPPOSITION MAY
SCORE SOME RHETORICAL POINTS IN DENOUNCING THE "DICTATORIAL"
TACTICS OF THE MAJORITY, BUT ON BALANCE THE GOVERNMENT
SEEMS TO HAVE GAINED STRENGTH BOTH FROM ENHANCED
SELF-CONFIDENCE AND AN IMPROVED PUBLIC IMAGE OF UNITY AND

DECISIVENESS.

2. THE OPPOSITION CAN ALSO TAKE CONSIDERABLE SATISFACTION FROM ITS SUCCESS IN FORCING THE GOVERNMENT TO POSTPONE CONSIDERATION OF THE TAX REFORM BILL, THE MOST IMPORTANT AND CONTROVERSIAL ITEM ON THE AGENDA, ECEVIT COULD NOT OVERCOME THE ARITHMETIC OF THE SITUATION: THE TAX BILL HAS SOME 200 ARTICLES, ON EACH OF WHICH THE OPPOSITION COULD FORCE SEPARATE DEBATE AND VOTES. IN THE MEANTIME, THE GOVERNMENT BUSINESS WAS GRINDING TO A HALT BECAUSE THE ENTIRE CABINET HAD TO SPEND 10 OR MORE HOURS A DAY IN THE ASSEMBLY. A NUMBER OF DEPUTIES HAD URGENT BUSINESS ABROAD, INCLUDING FONMIN OKCUN AT THE UNGA. THERE WAS ALSO A GENERAL FEELING, EVEN IN THE GOVERNMENT RANKS, THAT THE TAX BILL WAS TOO COMPLEX AND PERHAPS TOO HASTILY WRITTEN TO BE FORCED THROUGH THE ASSEMBLY WITHOUT THOROUGH DEBATE. AS A RESULT OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS, THE GOVERNMENT AND THE OPPOSITION AGREED TO CONSIDER THE TAX REFORM BILL IN REGULAR LEGISLATIVE SESSION BEGINNING IN NOVEMBER.

3. OF THE THREE BILLS PASSED, THE CHANGE IN THE ASSEMBLY'S INTERNAL REGULATIONS PROBABLY HAS THE MOST POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE. IT WILL PERMIT THE GOVERNMENT, DESPITE ITS SMALL MAJORITY, TO FORCE THE OPPOSITION TO WORK ACCORDING TO THE GOVERNMENT'S LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR. WE ARE NOT SO SURE OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE OTHER BILLS
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PASSED.

4. THE MINING BILL GIVES WIED POWERS TO THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE OVER OR NATIONALIZE PRIVATE FIRMS ENGAGED IN MINING OPERATIONS. ENERGY MINISTER BAYKAL HAS DENIED THAT ANY IMMEDIATE NATIONALIZATIONS ARE PLANNED, BUT INDICATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS ITS EYE ON LIGNITE AND BORAX MINING INTERESTS AS AREAS WHERE PRODUCTION AND PRICING POLICIES OF PRIVATE FIRMS ARE UNSATISFACTORY. THE GOVERNMENT SAID IT NEEDED THESE POWERS TO IMPROVE THE ABILITY OF THE STATE TO SOLVE ITS ENERGY PROBLEMS. SINCE THE BILL PUTS ALL PRIVATE MINING INTERESTS IN JEOPARDY, THE BILL SEEMS TO ENSURE THAT THE PRIVATE SECTOR WILL PLAY LITTLE OR NO ROLE IN EXPLOITING NEW ENERGY SOURCES.

5. THE OTHER BILL APPROVED BY THE LOWER HOUSE IS A GRAB BAG OF MEASURES AIMED AT STIMULATING THE ECONOMY AND AVOIDING WASTE. IT EMPOWERS THE GOVERNMENT, FOR A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR, TO ISSUE IMPLEMENTING DECREES WITH THE FORCE OF LAW. THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MUST SUBSEQUENTLY TAKE ACTION TO CONFIRM OR REJECT ANY SUCH DECREES. WE UNDERSTAND THE GOVERNMENT

INTENDS TO USE THESE POWERS TO IMPROVE ITS CONTRACTING
PROCEDURES, MAKE CHANGES IN CUSTOMS DUTIES, RAISE
BORROWING CEILING FOR TPAO (TURKISH PETROLEUM COMPANY)
AND THY (TURKISH AIRLINES), MAKE GREATER USE OF THE FUNDS
OF SOCIAL INSURANCE ORGANIZATIONS, REDUCE WASTE IN USAGE
OF OFFICIAL VEHICLES, INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SHAREHOLDERS
REQUIRED TO FOUND A BANK, DEPOSIT THE INCREASED RESOURCES OF
CERTAIN STATE ECONOMIC ENTERPRISES DERIVED FROM PRICE
RISES INTO A SPECIAL FUND TO BE USED TO COVER THE LOSSES
OF OTHER STATE ENTERPRISES, ECT. SPIERS

NOTE BY OC/T: TELEGRAM DELAYED IN TRANSMISSION.
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